

Memorandum

TO: PARK AND RECREATION
COMMISSION

FROM: Yu-Wen Huang

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: October 16, 2017

Approved

Date

COUNCIL DISTRICT: 3

SUBJECT: ST. JAMES PARK REDEVELOPMENT CONCEPT DESIGN UPDATE

RECOMMENDATION

Accept the concept design update for St. James Park redevelopment

OUTCOME

Acceptance of the concept design update will enable the design team to move forward into the design phase and prepare the updated cost estimates and phasing plans for City Council's consideration in May 2018.

BACKGROUND

On November 10, 2015, the Mayor and Council approved the St. James Park Revitalization Strategy, including establishment of a St. James Park Capital Vision. City staff advanced the strategy through selection of a design consultant using the City's procurement process combined with a Design Competition component. The four design teams selected to enter into a design contract with the City were: CMG Landscape Architecture (CMG), !Melk / Fr*ee, Meyer + Silberberg and Wallace, Roberts and Todd (WRT). Each team presented its design vision publicly to the Jury on October 15, 2016. The Jury met in private to discuss the presentations directly afterward and decided that it needed more information about the top ranked design proposals from !Melk / Fr*ee and CMG before making a decision. The Jury met by telephone conference on November 3, 2016 for a second time to consider additional information received from the top two ranked consultants and make a final decision. The Jury selected CMG as the top ranked consultant based on materials reviewed, the design presentation and discussion of selection criteria.

On March 7, 2017, City Council accepted the St. James Park Design Competition Jury's recommendation to select CMG Landscape Architecture as the winning firm and authorized the City Manager or his designee to negotiate and execute a Master Agreement with CMG in an amount not to exceed \$1,000,000 to support the environmental review process, design, and community outreach efforts related to St. James Park.

CMG's preliminary concept plan for St. James Park selected by St. James Park Design Competition Jury was based on very limited information and drafted over an aerial photo. It was a high level concept plan. A site survey, site analysis, and community input would be needed to refine the concept plan to better meet the community needs and respond to the site constraints.

ANALYSIS

The design framework developed during the competition phase has been guiding and will continue to guide any adjustments and revisions made to the park plan as the design progresses into construction documents. The framework is made up of three concepts: a historic edge with Victorian gardens as seen in some historic park images, a contemporary core with main community spaces and a monument walk integrating all park elements.

In the past several months City staff and the CMG design team have done various outreach activities including two intercept events at National Night out on August 1st, 2017 and Viva Calle San Jose on September 17, 2017, an online survey August through October. The design team asked the community to answer questions about the design of the main community spaces: the dog park, the picnic glove and the playground. The questions included topics such as the character, scale and amenities for these spaces. The community feedback was incorporated into the refined concept plan. A community meeting presentation has been scheduled on October 25th, 2017.

Besides soliciting input from the community, the design team has also worked closely with Friends of Levitt Pavilion San José Board on the Pavilion design and collaborated with City departments and related agencies on the issues such as historic preservation, 2nd Street and light rail alignment through the Park.

Some adjustments as described below have been made to the concept plan:

- To increase the physical and visual permeability of the Victorian garden edge, additional access points were added and the existing ones were increased in width.
- The fountain was relocated away from the rail lines and placed adjacent to the playground.
- The Kennedy Memorial was shifted east to increase the visual and physical access from the corner of St. John Street and 1st Street and make room for the playground.

- The dog park was separated into two parks: one for small dogs and the other for big dogs. Both dog parks will have a double gate with two entries/exits each. Entries/exits have ample space for dogs to pass safely. A large planted buffer was created between the dog parks and the picnic pavilion. The solid edge of the picnic pavilion blocks dog noise.
- Access from the corner of St. James Street and 3rd Street was improved and relocated to provide circulation along the historic diagonal axis.
- The Levitt Pavilion Green Room was relocated away from the sidewalk and set into the Victorian garden edge, right behind the stage. The building will have a planted exterior and will blend into the garden. The solid wall of the building will also block concert noise. Sound analysis has been performed to guide the design of the pavilion and minimize the noise impact to the surrounding developments during music events.
- One of the oldest character defining features of the park is the mature tree canopy. Our goal is to celebrate this character defining feature by keeping as many existing trees as possible and by prioritizing large oak specimens for transplant where they are in conflict with the proposed park program.
- The intent of the concept plan is to strategically place the new trees and support buildings outside of historic sight-lines. The tree plan provides openings to see historic buildings around the perimeter at key moments within the park and maintain the historic canopy.
- Through discussion with other City Departments and related agencies such as Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) and California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), the refined concept plan assumes that buses and private vehicles can be removed from 2nd Street, and VTA light rail and station will remain in the park. The redesign of the station platform is recommended to meet the current safety standards outlined by CPUC.
- The sizes, locations and materials of the park support structures were developed based on the space layout for park amenities and sustainability consideration.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

Acceptance of this concept plan update will enable the design team to move forward into the design phase. Staff will report back to Council with 25% design plans, updated cost estimates and phasing plans in May 2018.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

There were two intercept events at National Night out on August 1st, 2017 and Viva Calle San Jose on September 17th, 2017, and an online survey August through October. A community meeting presentation has been scheduled on October 25th, 2017. Printed community meeting notification was mailed to adjacent property owners and residents within 1000 feet of the park site. The meeting notice was also posted on Mercury News Sunday newspaper on October 15th, 2017, the City calendar, the City webpage for Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Department, and Social Media such as Facebook, Twitter and NextDoor. Additionally, staff has also worked with Council District 3 office, San Jose Downtown Association, St. James Park Advisory Committee, Friends of Levitt Pavilion San Jose, San Jose Downtown Residents Association to get the word out to their network.

/s/
Yu-Wen Huang
Project Manager, Parks, Recreation and
Neighborhood Services Departments

Attachment: Competition Plan
Concept Plan

For questions, please contact Yu-Wen Huang at (408) 793-5595.

COMPETITION PLAN

PRC AGENDA: 11/01/17
ITEM: VII. C.
10.2016



CONCEPT PLAN

PRC AGENDA: 11/01/17
ITEM: VII. C.
10.2017

